WORDEATER



#121

Wordeater exists as a forum of creative expression for the Joliet Junior College community, including students, alumni, faculty, and staff. It celebrates the diversity of ideas, beliefs, values, language, media, and people of its community. It seeks to promote artistic, personal, and political expression, democratic values, and social justice, including fairness and equal opportunity, rights, and access. Wordeater rejects censorship and attempts to reflect the artistry and lives of its community, while embracing JJC's Core Values of respect, integrity, collaboration, humor and well-being, innovation, and quality.

Wordeater #121 & Fall 09 E-zine

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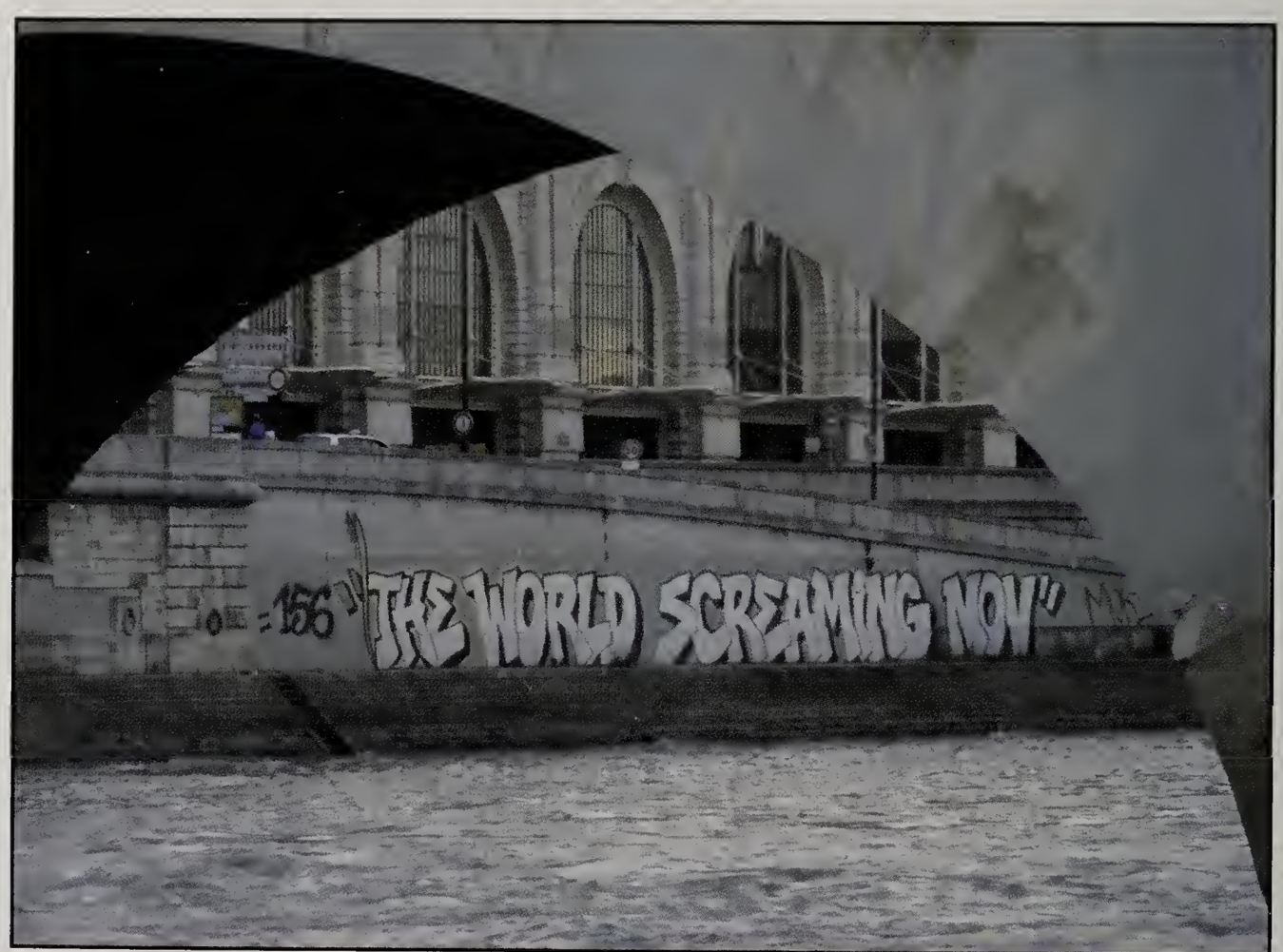
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WHATEVER END YOU'RE ON

BRIAN MICHAEL JAMES SMALLWOOD

in youth
you cannot be robbed of the strangeness
that surrounds you
total poems for a lost generation
& a confused new one
pink elephants in rhapsody

whatever end you're on
as long as you get out somewhat unscathed
you're alright



PARISIAN POLITICAL GRAFFITI

MICK

SUNDANCE

DA OMEN

Broken hearts in the dark
Before daybreak
Looking for one
To romance
There is none
So I dance
With the daughter
Of the Sun
Honey mooned me
In the twilight
Wearing a white dress
Ultra violet rays
Made dark loveliness
A divine pilot
On the ....Chicago.... Skyline
Moving to the groove
Of my heartbeat
Stepping to soothe
Burning bare feet
On tip toes
I stare into fiery eyes
Blinded by glare
As the snow drips
I kiss her lips
She eclipse
Singing song in season
Hips swing
From fall back to autumn
Sundance surpasses stardom

His Fool

Cecilie Mieland

The dark country road stretched out in front of my little Saturn car. The odometer's numbers slowly rolled closer and closer to 204,000 miles. The static from my thirteen-year-old speakers had grown irritating just a few days before, so I opted to drive in silence. This road was the kind where any speed limit or "no passing zone" sign was disregarded, and any law abiding citizen was passed and shot angry looks. I dug my nails into my steering wheel; I muttered soft words to myself as I drove. I stared down at my speedometer and saw an unwonted speed; my custom was always to go at least thirteen miles over the speed limit. I pushed on the accelerator.

A small green pepper and onion pizza was nestled in my passenger seat. Its strong scent had filled my tiny car and began to make my mouth water. A salty tear dripped into my mouth and, for a moment, the pizza scent had been masked. I had been duped into taking the delivery way out in the country. I didn't mind this time, though; I needed time to think.

The subject with me always seemed unavoidable. In some way or another, my parentage always came up. I didn't mind really, I enjoyed talking about my mother. In fact, I was the one who brought her up more than half of the time. My father was a different story, however....

"I've never met your father I don't think," my co-worker said after discussing my sibling's appearances. "I still really don't see a very big resemblance between you three. Not counting Dan... I've never really met Dan either." She was a shorter girl, about six years my senior. She was perched on the steel table near the pizza phones, which had been silent for nearly forty-five minutes. "I'm sure if I saw you and your brother's father and then Dan and Heidi's father and ALL of you together I could see it, but not now." She pondered this for a bit. She swung her feet from the table. Her black flip-flops made a smacking sound as they hit her foot.

"Well I look like my father," I began to tell the pizza girl. I was standing about three feet before her near the "corner" (the designated pizza cutting area). "After he left, my mother wouldn't have our pictures close together. Guess it brought out the resemblance more... too painful for her I suppose. And my sister looks like her father." I held my hands apart to try to show our separation. "And the two boys look like our mother, but both in a different way..." I pondered for a second to try to explain this better. "You can see it more in Dan's face when he isn't smiling and more in Mike's face when he is smiling." Once again I held my hands apart to show their separation. I trailed off then.

A deluge of memories poured into my vision. My mother was sitting in front of me. Her worn, gentle, olive-colored hands brushed back my hair. "You look so much like him," she would tell me. "I think that's why he loved you... He never wanted you at first," she said with a smile. "All throughout my pregnancy he tried to deny that you were his. He didn't even come to the hospital when you were born." She paused for a moment before continuing, "I drove myself, while in labor, to the hospital. But when I brought you home, and when he looked into your face, he never doubted it... you were his baby." I could still see the hurt in her eyes even though this was many years ago. "You're softer than he is," she would say as she traced my face, "and you have my eye color and my lips... he had such thin lips... But you are his after that."

I shook my head and came back to reality. My co-worker didn't even seem to notice; I often trailed off for no apparent reason.

"Ya-know," I said to her, "about four years after he was gone, I saw my mother leaning over our kitchen table. I peeked over her shoulder and saw that she had one small gold picture frame before her. In it she had put his picture and mine side by side. In the same frame. After four years of not allowing our pictures to be within three feet of each other...." I smiled a little to myself.

"I had a friend where that happened...only her mother resented her for looking like her father. Not like it was her fault," she said with a scoff. She had a habit of playing with a tongue stud whenever there was a lull in a conversation. I could hear the metal clicking against her teeth.

My mother had never resented me for it. I think she saw me as the last part of him that she had. His last gift to her. She used to tell me how much she loved my father. She would stretch the word "love" so it lasted at least three seconds. "He really was the love of my life... More than anyone else, I loved that man." Memories of him getting drunk and beating her, of her taking three year-old me and four and-a-half-year-old Mikey into the woods to hide from his wrath, of the shattered TV he threw, of the woman-shaped hole in the wall...they all flooded into my view.

"Have you heard from your father since your mom died?" Brittany asked.

"Three times. It took me about four months to track him down. I had to write to Germany to find his family. Then they wrote to him. He wrote me a letter telling me to send my number to his family in Germany so that they could give it to him. I think it was just so I didn't know where he was exactly. Pretty sure he is in the Dominican Republic... At least that is what I've been told. His letter had no return address."

She gave a nod as she hopped off of the table. Her feet dragged to the floor as she walked, making a shuffling noise. It was later in the night and there was only one pizza in the oven. She walked over to take it out. She was short, and the enormous oven seemed to dwarf her even more. She stood on her toes and reached her whole arm into the 550 degrees. But she was a professional and didn't even flinch. She shuffled over to the corner and slid the small pizza on to a cardboard circle.

"You know what's funny?" I asked as I watcher her pick up the knife. "When he talked to me, he made me all of these promises. He said he was gonna fly me down to see him and his villa and put me in his will and everything. And I believed him. I haven't heard from him in over six months."

She nodded and cut the pizza.

"That's not the sad part though... I really believed him. And if he were to call me tomorrow, and tell it to me all over again, I'll believe him again. And again. It's been ten years since I've seen him. Did you know that?"

She gave me a look that was trying not to be pity. "This is going out in the country..." she said with a nod towards the pizza as she set it on the table. I heard the metal click against her teeth. She wasn't very good when it came to emotions; she seemed unsure of what to say.

"Yeah, I know." I picked it up and started to the door. "I'll be back!" I called, trying to be cheerful. Sylvia Plath popped into my head as the screen door slammed. Our lives were so alike it was almost scary. The poem "Daddy" was what made me first realize our connection. The first time I read the poem, I was comforted. I was not alone. We both held our fathers up to an almost God-like status; something to be feared, worshiped, hated, and loved all at the same time.

When I was younger, my mother used to try to bring me to church. She would tell me that if you teach a child young, they will never stray from "the path." Hitler always popped in my head when I thought back to those days.

The Hitler youth programs. Hitler and my father. Every woman adores a Fascist. He was a master.

"Panzer Mann, Panzer Mann" I whispered to myself as I set the small pizza on the passenger seat. I could still hear his voice... I could still hear his thick German accent making me believe that he hung the moon. I set myself onto the driver seat. I turned the key and my sleepy car roared to life.

"...if he were to call me tomorrow, and tell it to me all over again, I'll believe him again. And again." A tear streamed down my cheek. I remembered his eyes... his tired brown eyes. My mother was thirty-three when she had me, and my father was fifty-four. I remembered his hands... He had such large hands for a man who barely hit six feet in height. My mother told me it was because he was a malnourished baby, growing up in World War II Germany. I remembered the clogs he would always wear, his white pants and thin black belt. I panic when I see a man dressed like my father. I panic every time. I remembered his eccentric behavior like wearing women's coats, crouching on top of furniture like a Panzer-man, getting mad and cutting up my mother's clothes, burying random things in the back yard like forks and empty picture frames.

I pulled my car onto the main street. By this time tears were running down my face. He still left us, he still left me. We were at least his third family. At least there were two before us that we knew about. He left them too. I had always known this, even when I was little. I had brothers and sisters that didn't even know I was born. I knew he would do the same thing to us, to me. I tried so hard as a girl to get him to stay. At times I would get so angry with him, even hate him, but I would never show it. I would be afraid he would leave. I would try to be like him, the way he wanted me to be. Tears rolled down my chin and down my neck.

I was nine years old on the day he left. I still remember that day so well. The sun was shining through the thick oak trees, the green grass seemed almost transparent through the sunlight, dust particles lazily floated in the air... and the white Mercedes-Benz disappearing down the wooded driveway.

"...if he were to call me tomorrow, and tell it to me all over again, I'll believe him again. And again. And Again. And Again. And Again." I sniffed and blinked my eyes. I tried to get a hold of myself. I whispered under my shaking breath, "I'm still your fool Daddy.... You trained me so well. Daddy Daddy, you bastard, I'm NOT through." My nails dug into the soft black steering wheel. My tears flowed at a steadier pace now. "After all these years, I'm still your fool." I slammed my hands against the steering wheel and bit my lip.

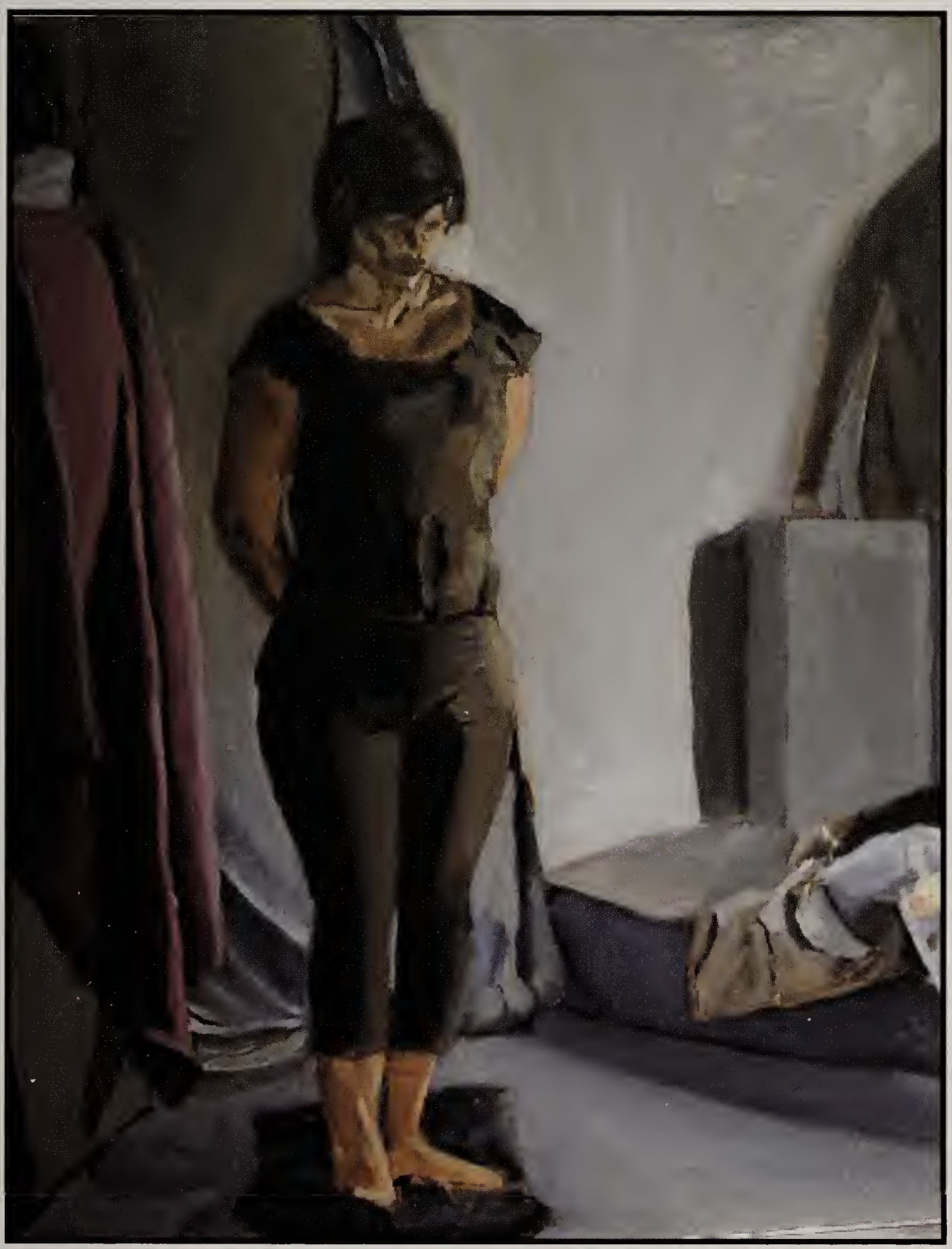
My mother used to tell me that I would be first in his arms if he ever came back. There were always bitter undertones in her words, but she would say them as if she was telling me the time of day, like there was not a doubt in her mind. I would get so mad at her. I would get so angry for her confidence, angry that she would say such blasphemy. I would tell her that I hated him; I hated what he did to us. It's sad that I believed my own lies for so long.

"I'm your dog," I whispered angrily. "Mom was right. I'm done lying. I'll always come running. You can come back and then leave again, and if you were to call, I'd come. I'll run to you. Because I'm your fool. Because I was your baby."

My little car was far out into the country by now. My foot held the accelerator at about twenty miles over the speed limit. 204,001 miles glared up at me from the car odometer. The smell of green peppers and onions filled my car.

Tiffany

Zack Ferlin



STRIVE

DEBBIE LYNN CLODFELTER

Downtrodden and brokenhearted?
STRIVE
for higher ground and for the healing warmth of love.

Lost and confused in a dark tumultuous sea?
STRIVE
to find dry land for there is always a guiding light.

Angry and defiant against the world?
STRIVE
to find inner peace and offer love instead of hate into this cold world.

Unknowledgeable and impoverished?
STRIVE
to gain security by embracing the wisdom of others.

Young and courageous?
STRIVE
to help another man overcome his obstacles.

Rich and powerful?
STRIVE
to be more humble and to show compassion.

Old and wise?
STRIVE
to share your life with someone younger.

In all things we endeavor,
STRIVE
for excellence.

STRIVE for character and **STRIVE** for integrity...

In these things we will find peace, love, richness and wisdom – all of which bring upon us great success.

Crash

Nicole Novielli

Steel, steel
Iron, iron
Give me the strength
To withstand this siren.

Earth, earth
Rock, rock
Turn my face
Towards that ticktock clock.

Air, air
Wind, wind
Knowing what is coming;
That Death grinned.

Smoke, smoke
Flame, flame
Help him, and
Forget my name!

Haze, haze,
Spark, spark
...and now he's gone,
Death has hit His mark.
Sky, sky
Star, star
All I see, is
This crashed car.

Cloud, cloud
Rain, rain
White and Blue
Flashing heart's pain
Heaven, heaven
Universe, universe
I only wanted
To say goodbye first...

Court Adjourned
(the Court of Public Opinion)

Rob Dennison

Why is presumption of guilt
So highly valued when the
Opposite is the principle
From which our system is built?
Our society so vengeful
So thirsty for blood
So quick to judge what
We know so little of
The media feeds us with
Half truths and juicy gossip
Because that is what sells
And to the armrests of
Our comfort chairs
We slam down our fists
Our makeshift gavels

Eye for an eye
I condemn you to die
Under the principles of
Try and Fry
Your constitutional rights
No longer apply

Today's Honorable Justices
Of public opinion so
High and mighty in standing
Could be those next on the docket
Then would they care so
Much about the cash
Coming out of the
Taxpayer's pockets?
Are defense attorneys
Still the liars that
Help the scum of the earth
Beat the system
When it is your own
Future and well being
That is resting
With them?

Day by day
Story after story . . .

Eye for an eye
I condemn you to die
Under the principles of
Try and Fry
Your constitutional rights
No longer apply

Day by day
Story after story . . .

To the arm rests
Of our comfort chairs
We slam down our fists
Our makeshift gavels

Ignorant of those
Who mourn

The court of
Public opinion
Is adjourned



CITY LIGHTS

PAUL SCHROEDER



COTTON CANDY

CHELSEA VOLINSKY

Dark Matter

Adam Johnson

I watch this house eat me.
Like the waves chomping on the beach,
Consumed by nature's advancements
To consume its entirety.
Inexplicable,
Intolerable,
Inconceivable,
Unavoidable,
Truth.

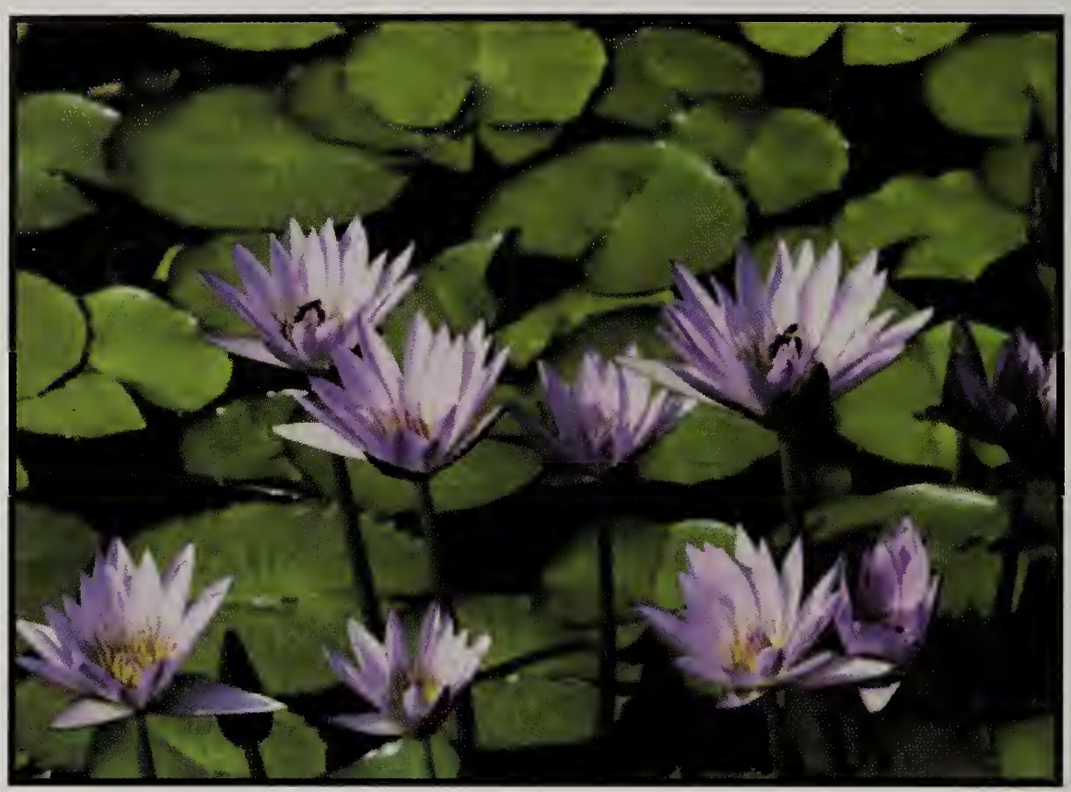
Opposing contrast with similarity,
Clarity,
Efficiency.
Fluorescent fish of golden charm,
Waving their passersby with an infantry
Of glossy shadows.

The shallow waters of rock and sand,
Start from the soles up,
In a seemingly unorthodox fashion,
But truly in measures far from the
Naive tendencies of our vacant perception.

The hinges will rust and weaken,
The synthetic lights will all burn out,
The wormwood will rot and wither,
Dustless,
Weighed into the seabed.

Broken Flower

Mark Anthony Miske



Sometimes I believe I have special powers
Like the ability to mend broken flowers
Nothing huge, like walking on water
But maybe fathering my own daughter

Fixing that broken clock on that shelf
Saving our family from itself
Stopping wars from bringing death and blood
Saving the people that don't swim well in a flood

Feeding the poor
Waging peace, instead of war
Rescuing cats from trees
Assisting the elderly, across the street

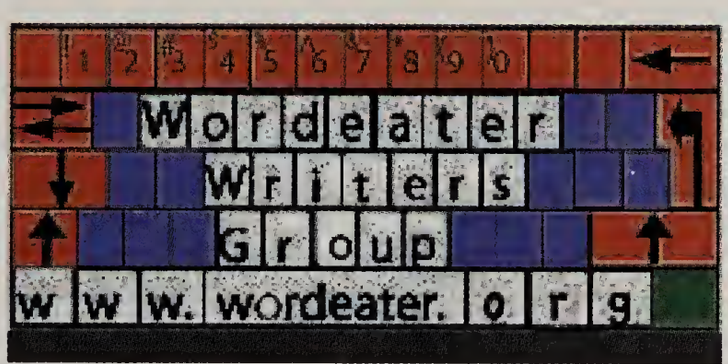
Blocking recyclables from the landfills
Insuring the sick, so they can afford their pills
Love everyone from the womb
Be the happiest person in the room

Ensure our future in the minds of a child
Educate them and let their imaginations run wild
Spend quality time with my family, if even for an hour
But who am I kidding; I can't even mend a broken flower

Deepest Reflection

Lauren Rinke

The catacombs of my heart
capture fractured bits of soul
but they simply fade away.
Along with precious memories -
shattered like mirrors that don't reflect,
and once strong feelings that are not returned,
merely die away instead.
And tears that fall from swollen eyes,
drown small truths in a lifetime of lies.
Where darkest confessions go unheard,
and whispered vows break and learn.
Years of sheltered grief dwell when foots steps echo,
in a strange place where tragedies meet then cease to be.
For this is where fear drives me,
as I struggle to escape this darkened place -
this tomb - this fractured piece of me.





Starburst

Chelsea Volinsky

Get in My Way Lord

Theresa Ragan

Let me live my life on my knees,
Help me choose right from wrong,
Give me the wisdom to teach others of you,
Stay with me each of my days,
Do what needs to be done with me,
Guide me in the path that I should travel,
Start with me Lord, so I can live your way,
Get in my way Lord.

Echo

Taylor Bowen

The stars swirl around
My mind
Clearing the dust that
collects in the darkened corners,
corruption or darkness
Overtaken by what can be called

Enlightenment,
severity of the soul.

A closed lock clicks and
echoes through my
Thoughts..

I close my eyes.

my spine tingles.
I feel my heart
My breath is still

My walls, they fall.
I break the bottom
of crumbling veins,
I slash my hate on
the brief despair
that has set on the
dissonance in my heart.

I scream.
My eyes fill with the
blood of consciousness and
rebirth.
My awakening has
begun.

I open myself for the
first time,
my inspiration
mysterious.

There is something.
A presence,
A feeling

Surrounding me like
a million sun rays
gliding and caressing,
flooding me and glowing.

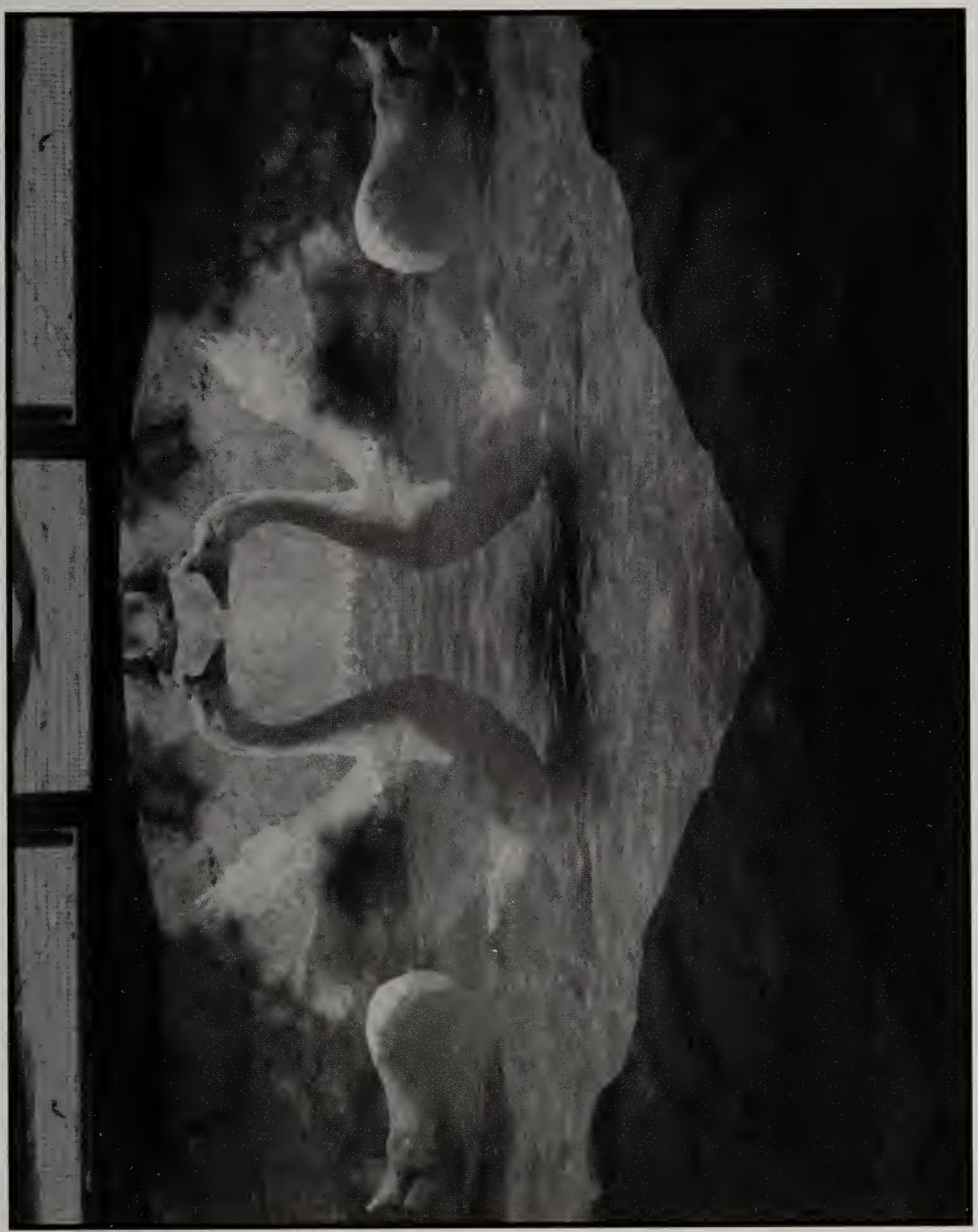
I shiver.
I smirk.

I know what's to come.



ENTER...IF YOU DARE

MICK



FACED WITH SELF

MICK

A Digression

Shawn Faust

As he stood on a teetering cast-iron chair, he could feel the fibers of the noose intermingle with the hairs of his five-o-clock shadow.

Two hours earlier he had a head full of acid, a stomach full of Jager, and was still searching for the rope.

Two days earlier he was still married.

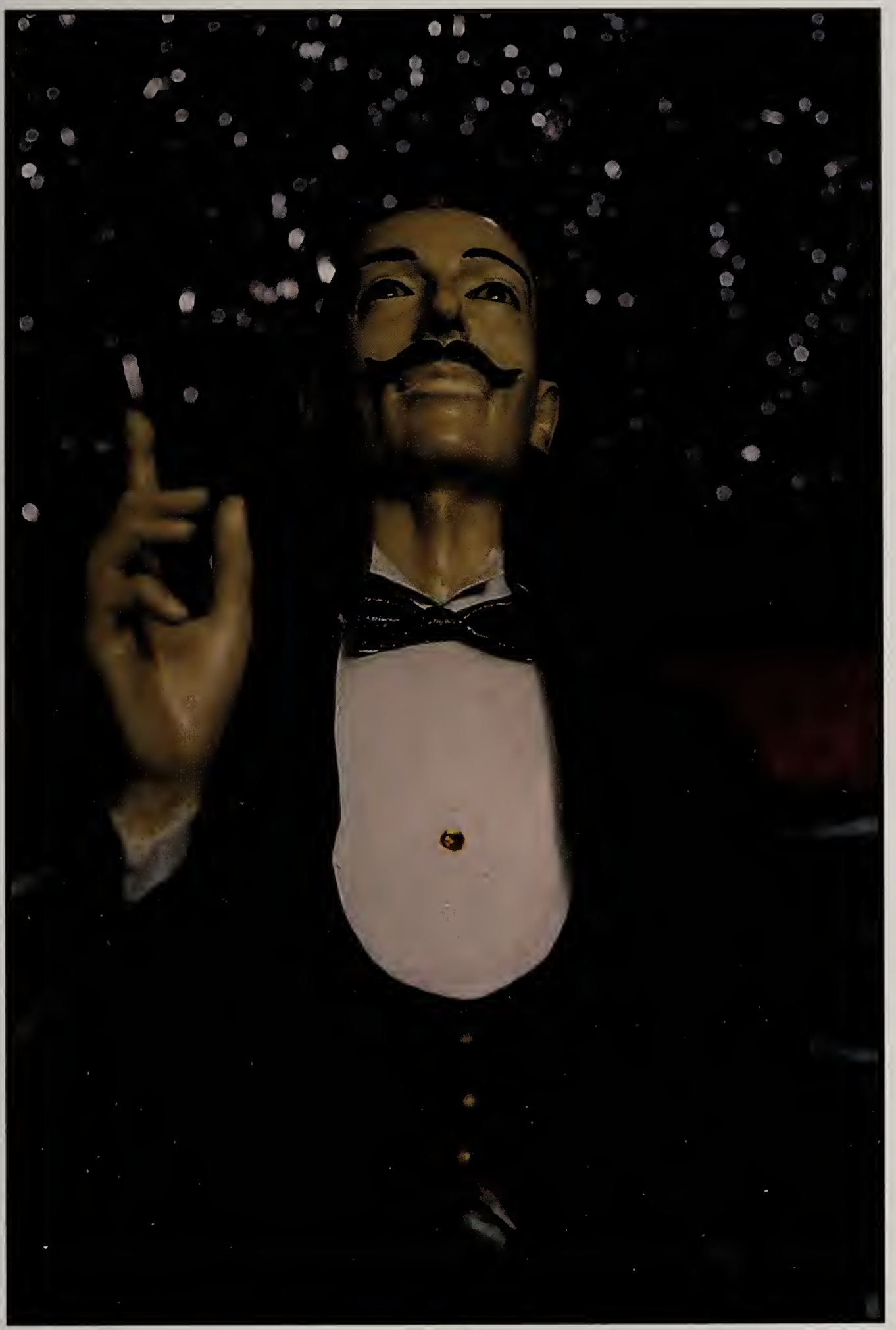
Two months earlier was when the fighting reached a peak and she gathered her things and left for the first time.

Two years earlier he was graduating from Purdue and returned her subtle smile and wink as he crossed the stage.

And two decades earlier he was yet to even be an idea in the minds of two lovers meeting for pizza.

But now you can find him at the Ramada Inn, hanging in

Room 202.



The Ringmaster

Heather Smith



INNOCENCE

SARAH SABALLA

Cycle of Life

Mick

Immaculate spark
In aqua serenity
Ah... Welcome to hell

Blissful misery
Innocence maturity
Journey's growing pains

Twilight suffering
Candle slowly flickers out
Welcome to heaven

Killer Clock

Miranda Gothard

Stop moving little clock.
I can't handle the shock
of your bold face honesty.
With each minute
you're ending my life.
It's not the stress
or the strife that's killing me,
but your perfect rhythmic certainty.



TIMTIM NUMERO UNO

CHELSEA VOLINSKY

Terror

Aaron Criss

Consciousness came to me. The scent of rich, earthy soil filled my nostrils. The cold, damp earth beneath me chilled my bones. A foreboding truth pierced my soul: I was utterly alone. I lay there for several minutes, gathering my thoughts, wondering where I was, and wondering how I had come to be here. Water could be heard trickling in the distance, and also the sound of a light breeze weaving between leaves and branches. Small woodland creatures scuttled about in the thicket, and birds were chirping in the trees above.

Lifting my head, I found it was twilight, and what light was left cast evanescent shadows through the forest that surrounded me. I lay under a large oak tree on top of a thin, tattered white sheet, full of holes and smeared with dirt and blood...

There was a path of woodchips to the right of my former resting place. Rising to my knees, and then to my feet, I walked carefully over to the trail as the scent of pine wafted up to my nose. Perplexed at how the trail had come to be here, I looked around in a full circle. As far as the eye could see, there was nothing but woodland and the twist of the path weaving to and fro. The sight would have been beautiful had it not been for an ominous sense of evil that hung over that place...

Looking further down the path I beheld a lone flower, delicately growing out of the pine chips. It had alluring, scarlet red petals, and appeared to be shrouded in a glowing light. Bewitched by this sight, I walked over and plucked this goddess of flowers. When I lifted it to my nose to take in its scent, a sulfurous stench filled my nostrils and what had been a beautiful blossom in my hand turned into a pile of ash...

At that moment, as if I had committed some terrible

sin, the remaining light in the sky disappeared and the forest was cast into darkness. Night had come. All went silent, and a biting chill ran down my spine as the evil presence seemed to grow heavier and the breeze became a torrent of wind cutting through the trees. Lightning flashed and revealed in the distance a hooded figure clothed in a scarlet robe. The figure appeared to levitate above the ground...

A paralyzing terror fell over me as the creature began to glide steadily down the path towards me. My heart shook my chest. A sensation of needles penetrating skin plagued my body. My inner being screamed at me to turn and flee as fast as I could away from this sorcerous abomination, but my body was frozen in place, unable to move...

The creature approached steadily and I fell face down onto the path as my knees collapsed beneath me. My body was as lead and I could not rise. The creature stood over me. The stench of the rotting dead threatened my consciousness, and I pleaded with Death to take me. An unseen force gripped my body, placing it into an upright position. My eyes fought to look away from the creature's face, being more eager to meet death than to look on this abomination face to face, but they moved against my will and gazed steadily into the creature's hood...

Lying within numbers.

Mitchell Kristie

THIRTEEN!

She was screaming now.

I should have told her twenty-one; that was the truth.

Babe, but that was before I met you!

Again another lie, nineteen and twenty had been two months into us dating.

Well what was I then, Miss high and mighty?

She told me one.

The number was more like 5 and yet exactly like 0

You see she only counted those who she cared about,

And no matter how hard she tried she couldn't fuck herself.

Deep and Emotional Thoughts

Gerald Haymer

Besides the memory of the people and things I love my mind contains dark thoughts

Not just my body is but my mind is shackled and my happiness comes to a halt

I froze my heart and locked it inside a box without a key

So no one can do any more damage that hasn't already been done to me

Nowadays people's minds are filled only with politics and such

But my head is deeper than that and I'd learn about the very first Zion if I must

My style of life has a simple code: look, listen, and learn

I've lived by that since birth but in my dreams at night I view my own casket that burns

In my eyes you'll find more clues to life if you just go beyond

So in other words you have to pull the cleanliness out of a dirty pond

Knowledge is power in every shape, form, and fashion

So in all reality learning new things is my passion

See in this world most people find flaws in others to cover up their own

And to me those are acts of children so you can't possibly claim to be grown

Basically what I'm saying is not rocket science but only common sense

And accepting God as your Lord and Savior is more than getting in holy water and taking a rinse

Retrospect

Shawn Faust

Inebriation:
The ultimate self-mesmerization.
Vows made in liquor
Are promises that die quicker
Than a period of sobriety.

Rewind, fastforward,
Pause in retrospect:
Caught in a spiral of self-disrespect.

For my liver I weep,
But the memories I keep
As atonement
For the postponement
Of words slurred into silence.
Rewind, fastforward,
Pause in retrospect:
Caught in a spiral of self-regret.

Lackluster,
I try to muster
The strength for one more drink
But I'm sitting on the brink
Of a cold-hard sleep.

Rewind, fastforward,
Pause in retrospect:
I'm drowning in a spiral of self-disrespect.

UNCEREMONIOUS

KARA PONCE

It's a mad dash for the courthouse---
pedal to floor
bated breath
edgy anticipation

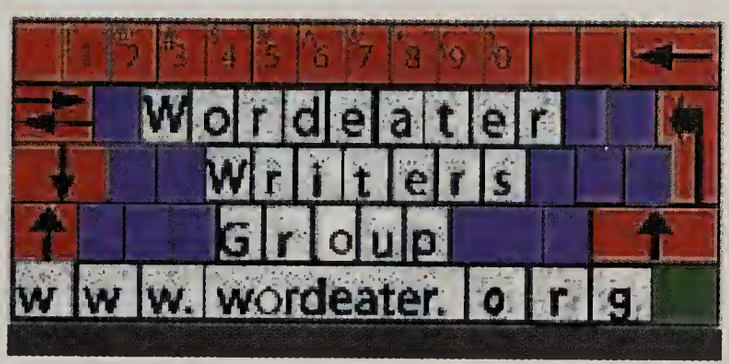
Security says," Slide your feet"
(as you pass on through)
Don't touch the sides,
Don't sneak on past
Leave your camera phone at the door
---should've thought of that before

Up... up... up..
In the crammed elevator
Travel accommodations with perfunctory speed
Three, two, one---ding
Metal slats part with mechanical grinding
Heaven is a mysterious location, vertical from here
(but not really that near)

Misdirected, misinformed
--there is no room 211
Or rather, it doesn't lie between 210 & 212
Where is the path to liberation?
Only surmounting expectation
Lined up like cattle in shoots
Ear twitchin', nostril dilatin'---
Number's up, but no good.

At long last
The bride and groom approach the bench
Quick, vows exchanged with easy recitation---
notice the groom's broad grin?
---or the bride's likeness to an tiny mouse who's
happened upon cheese
All captured in quick firing snapshots

Six, five, four---out the door.
Mid-hallway mess and tangle
Courtesies are exchanged
---congratulations are in order
Then back to the rodeo-clown elevator car
Back down to Earth
past the shoots
in a turnstile departure
Yet didn't it all seem
----anticlimactic.





Be Careful, Little One

Beatrice Baker

Legal Verse

Da Omen

Law courts Poetry in a
Flirtatious public defense
He divided by
S/he multiplied times
Dirty laundry subtract
Statutory legal briefs add
Passionate crimes equal
The legality of love
Law like Love
Until debt do they part
Segregates the church
From the State and
Thawed Brains
From flawed Hearts

Per the jury
The library of congress
Tell lies, stories
Patented Perjury
The Poet Lawyerate
Copywrite's Copyright
Open arguments
Spoken word
statements Of Prose
Polluted by
Political prostitutes
Paralegal pimps
The trick wave
Buy bye to
The John Judge
Shaken hands
Hold a Grudge
Honestly
Your Honor
Idols & Icons
'll con you
run a game
one cannot
trademark truth
Its public domain

Masochism Never Looked So Cool

Mitchell Kristie

I heard the glass smash. I heard the whole fucking car explode as far as the police reports were concerned. But to be honest, most of the whole incident is a blank to me. I don't remember getting in the car, I don't remember telling Hewitt I was going to get food, and I sure as hell don't remember any of the noise my car made as it careened through those yards. What I do remember exists in small moments connected by lines of empty thought, like towns connected by empty fields.

I remember running.

I remember the dull thud of my boots on the pavement. My eyes found Hewitt crouched near the corner of a house. We spoke in hushed tones as we fled. In part of my mind I recall a cop car on a hill but I don't know if that happened. I remember my voice bouncing off the walls of my skull and the plans I was making as we cut through corn fields and neighborhoods. My lungs began to burn; I didn't know where I was going but I knew I had to put space between me and the car.

I remember hiding.

We were crouched behind a set of bushes in front of one of those signs you see in front of rich neighborhoods. You know one of those nice little numbers made of stone and mortar with words like Chestnut or Oak Terrace scrawled across it in script. It was out in the open but the lighting had cast great shadows where we lay. I remember the prickle of the pine needles scraping against my backside while my face was pressed against cold brick. Here and there a car would pass. I would hold my breath, gasping for air when my heart screamed for relief.

I remember going to the police station.

I was drunk as hell. I walked in with a McDonald's cup full of Coke and entered a room where they began to interrogate me. They asked me to recall the night and write down what had happened. I told them stories. I spoke of being at a party and how my car had been stolen; they knew I was full of shit but I continued anyway. My story stopped making sense; my head was full of whiskey. I told them what I knew and signed the confession. I saw the sun when they transported me. It was rising as it always did in the East, streaks of orange and pink lit the horizon on fire.

I remember being in Will County Jail.

The first room I had been in was all white; every wall had a concrete bench and every bench was covered thick with years of paint. There were about six of us in there and every so often a speaker in the wall would belch out a name. It wasn't till I was alone I heard my own. They had moved me to C block.

I remember a man talking too much.

I had first met him in one of the holding cells. He talked for hours. Most of it was nonsense but he always brought up James Brown and living in New Orleans. He laughed and cried to himself and repeated over and over the same story. "Shit won't be another hour before James comes on down and bails me out." It didn't take long before we all knew he was crazy. Part of me wished he was telling the truth.

I remember getting out.

"Kristie, Mitchell, You have made bail. Make your bed and be ready to leave in five minutes." The loud speaker twanged off and my stomach turned. I was nervous; I didn't know what this meant. I had no idea how I had made bail. My dad was too broke to put up the money and I know my mom would rather see me sit in there until I had court. I was scared of how all this would resolve. In jail I had time to think; I had a plan but making bail was never part of it.

I remember my father's voice.

It was dark out; I had just walked home from my mom's. The dog was outside; he heard my footsteps and began to bark. My dad must have been awake because I was still standing in the driveway when he opened the front door. Shadows cast over his features but his voice was clear. "Mitch, is that you?" I hesitated for a moment. My body wouldn't move. I couldn't answer. I could see his eyes now. He looked me over for a moment and said, "There is food in the microwave if you're hungry." It was too casual; he didn't yell, he didn't even mention the accident. It seemed to be a trick, but there was honesty in his intentions. I didn't know this then, but my father understood the situation far more than I realized.

I remember the newspaper.

My mom gave it to me. In big broad lettering I headlined the police blotter: TEEN WHO ALLEDGEDLY STRUCK HOUSE ARRESTED. Lockport- Police have arrested a driver they say struck a house early Sunday. The vehicle appeared to (damage) several lawns as well as striking a residence, tree, and utility box. The

article went on later to explain how the car caught fire as well as how I had turned myself in to be later booked into the county jail. They had gotten my age wrong; I had turned nineteen three weeks prior to the incident. When I saw it for the first time an acidic pride washed over me; my escapade had precedence over a homicide.

I remember the irony.

It was cold when this part happened. I think there was snow on the ground - at least the idea of snow being on the ground is fitting. It was New Year's Eve, two months after I got out of jail. I was drinking vodka mixed with cranberry juice with Griff and Kara at my house. I had put on my shoes and headed for the door when Sheila walked in; Sheila was my step mom. "Dad's in jail!" she shouted. "Fucking pig pulled us over after we got gas." I was confused; I couldn't grasp why he would be in jail but I gave her all the money I had. I found out later he had been arrested for driving on a revoked license. I found out even later he had lost his license eight years before for getting a few DUI's. I walked into the garage and grabbed a half gallon of Skyy vodka he had left.

I remember hope and then anger.

I had been in court a few times and this was to be the last. I was to be sentenced. I had abandoned fear by then. I was tired of the anxiety that had accompanied the wait and the resolution, no matter how bad, was better than biting my nails over possibilities. I arrived on time and looked for my lawyer. I couldn't find him. I had no idea what room I was in but I eventually talked to a clerk and found out I was half an hour late. Ice crept up my spine; I had the letter my lawyer had sent me in my hand. Court: 9:30 a.m. It was 9:35. The clerk told me the case had settled with four hundred dollars in fines and court supervision. I had dodged another bullet but knew it wasn't right. I don't know what kind of bullshit my lawyer had pulled but I knew this wasn't justice.

I do not understand.

I can tell this story. I can fill in the blanks with what is imagined. I can talk of how my heart raced and my gut dropped but I cannot understand any of it. I am happy I came out clean but I am filthy because of it. I think now of what could have happened and how things could have gone. I imagine it as a movie with cast evils and heroic dialogues. I wish for the honesty of story to hide my guilt and the humor of the plot to quell my unrest. I think of the extremes and indulge in their outcomes; I could have died, or even killed someone, but if I did, I don't know if I would have even remembered.



THE SCARECROW

GARY WILSTERMAN

A Reunion

Hayley Hawkinson

She watched him turn the corner through the glass. As soon as she spotted him she had butterflies. Large, angry butterflies that made her stomach upset. The lukewarm coffee she was drinking gave a bad taste in her mouth; she longed for a mint or gum to nervously play with in her mouth. She felt like she was hiding behind the letters on the window but she knew he couldn't see her. The sun was shining too brightly on the glass, reflecting and blocking his gaze through.

He was wearing jeans and a plaid shirt, the arms rolled up, so you could see his art. They were new to her, since she had not seen him in two years. What a busy two years they were. Not any time to call or write like they had before. Plenty of time to fall into it with someone else. Promise things that you could not break. One look at him, though, and she was intrigued.

He did not walk like the other boys. No, she thought, like the other men. They were older now; both of them had grown in ways. She hoped he would see her as older, but still the same person. He had changed. He seemed bigger, stronger. His look more rugged and defined. His style, still very unique, reined in, like it had been reduced down to the most enticing bits....And then she though, when did this become a lovers meeting? A stolen moment? She felt like she was letting her mind, her lust, her heart get the best of her. Stay focused, she thought, you are a professional. You are successful. We are just old friends meeting in a strange city.

By that time he was walking into the coffee shop. He stopped, taking off his aviators, letting his eyes adjust to the dim light. He searched the room for her.

She felt panic. No time to back out now. He has spotted her.

The butterflies have gone mad.

She stood, weakly, to greet him.

* * *

As he walked over to her, he remembered how beautiful she was in person. She stood, warmly smiling with the sunshine beaming off her blonde hair. She seemed dressed in a way to suggest nothing, but there was something in her eyes. An angelic honey colored blouse and a sweetly fitting pair of blue jeans She was wearing her hair half up with long blonde curls running down her back. A single pearl on her neck, drew his attention down. He let his eyes linger for a moment or two.

She had claimed the window seat, usually reserved for lovers to gaze at those passing by, as the sun set in this beautiful golden city. It was that time of day where the sun becomes lazy, laying its shine on its side, casting mysterious shadows foretelling the excitement of the night. He wondered if they would spend any time in the dark together.

He thought about running his fingers through that hair, grabbing the back of her head. But he forced those thoughts out of his head. She was not here for that. He remembered they both were lovers to someone else. And he thought of that lover's face and that calmed him down.

She greeted him so sweetly with a peck on the cheek and a hug. He smelled that familiar smell of her perfume; she obviously had not changed that one piece of her since they had seen each other last. It permeated the air, overpowering the coffee house smells.

Hello, Mac.
Hi, Holly.



LATE NIGHT VOICEMAIL

NADLOSJA

Honey Brown eyes as sweet as it sounds
makes my heart flutter as I spin round and round.
I know you may think this poem is lame,
but I still love you all the same.
This is for the things that I don't say as much,
waiting for the day so that we could touch,
to express much more emphatically and such,
I spread out my arms and say, "I love you this much."
You are the one that I cherish
Whether in Rome, or Paris,
Amsterdam, or Japan, please know that I am
thinking about you baby as much as humanly possible
While I know you're frustrated because life has too many obstacles.
I hope that our love will be everlasting,
Even with our schedules of continuous "multitasking"
Sorry for calling so late baby boo,
I thought a little lame poem would brighten the morning for you.



On the Move

Chelsea Volinsky

The Devil's Dance

Lauren Kruis

She keeps tempting the rain from the clouds,
Laughing and cursing at each drop,
Renouncing dew.
Carrying on with Rebel Red seeping through her veins
Casting away uncertainties and broken promises like bones.
Danced like a heathen and stepped on his glass house,
Shards like skeletons digging their own holes into her skin.
Singing a morbid lullaby as she kisses the sky farewell,
Waves daggers at her captors,
Before plunging herself into the abyss.
Soul screaming up like whistling rockets.
Left his ear drums bleeding.

Modern Warfare

Dan Mitchell



Work

Jesse Wason

How I detest
My five to nine,
My peers being lax
I should just resign.

So that I must
Free myself from this mire
Kindly review my issue:
Poet looking for hire.

Splash me. Kiss me. Stop me.

Miranda Gothard

I do not have a problem being naked. Actually, it is a bit of a problem, my desire to shed clothing. It began in college when I started working as a nude model for a figure drawing class. At first, I was nervous when taking off the protective robe and exposing my innocent flesh to twenty-something strangers, but then I saw the result, my body on paper. I fell in love with my own form. I felt like a goddess being worshiped, my image replicated in various styles, my curves rendered in charcoal for posterity. I adored being on display, being admired, analyzed, complimented - being naked. I learned to look at myself differently in mirrors, to appreciate my proportions, to sidestep a faulty self image acquired from an insecure mother. I felt gorgeous, free, and never stopped to consider how my family would feel about my trade.

Lake Wildwood is an association, a gated community with homes built around a dredged-out creek turned into a two-hundred-and-forty-acre lake. This neighborhood has a second lake: Lake Tanglewood. It is small, and wake is not allowed. Tanglewood is attached to the campground that my family has been facilitating for the past seven years.

When my relatives and I were new to Wildwood, we owned a small pop-up camper. We stayed on one of the worst pieces of real estate available - between the Campground Host and the bathhouse. Yet with time, comes progression. We evolved.

Now, my Aunt Kelly and Uncle Mike have their own camper, and my mother shares an RV with my cousins Christine and Ryan. Our mobile homes were parked all Summer long on adjoining, wooded lots. At night, we built one bonfire and enjoyed our time together, often indulging in alcohol and marshmallows and hand-feeding a family of raccoons.

The Independence Day is the biggest holiday of the season. This year was no exception. My cousins and I were cruising around Lake Wildwood, listening to our favorite mix CD and consuming refined beverages. I had consumed four beers by the time my cousins' guests had arrived: Jason and Jillian, Jackie and Bryan, and Gail.

A little sloshed, I invited Gail to walk in the dark up to Tanglewood with me. She acquiesced to my request, as did

Bryan. We set off, passing the other campers, the playground, the basketball court, the bathhouse, and the volleyball net. Gail became winded as we climbed a decent sized hill with the moon lighting our persistent footfalls.

Tanglewood came into sight, still and empty. The homes surrounding the lake are located at the top of steep hills and are curtained behind trees. As I crossed onto the wooden dock, I was called by the waters to join their ebony depths for a spirit-lifting, soul-reviving, chi-cleansing swim. Without asking for permission, without thinking about the repercussions of my actions, I removed my clothes without care, and my feet left the slats of the pier.

I have been skinny-dipping in Tanglewood three times. The first time I was alone. I had been so frightened of being spotted that I spent most of my time in the water under the surface, only rising to gasp for oxygen and submerge again. I did not have the strength at the time to pull myself up onto the dock. I tried to swim to shore, but the tangles of watery weeds unnerved me. I felt trapped. Eventually, I found a clear patch of water and made it back on land again, naked, running to locate my clothes.

The second time, I was with my two best friends: Sean and Jenny. We were a little goofy and chose to enjoy the moment and all the liberation that comes from being nude. Jenny treated it like it was an orgasmic experience. Sean was strong enough to pull us both from the water and back onto the landing.

I was only alone in the water for a few moments before Bryan joined me. I did not even see him undress, though I would have refused to look, flat out averted my eyes. The man swam in my direction; my first thought was that he had a girlfriend and was too naked to be so close to me. Instinctively, I dunked him and swam away. We were merpeople, gracefully gliding, stretching and arching, our trim forms floating just beneath the surface. I had the strength this time to pull myself up onto the dock. Bryan followed me before I pushed him back into the water then dove in again.

Gail had remained clothed the entire time, innocently drinking her beer. When I was dressed again, she and I proceeded back to camp. I noticed Bryan was not with us, so I retreated, turned around and stepped onto the dock once more. I walked right up to him with my mind full of stars and lake water. Void of all intention, and like magnets in the dark, with unseeing eyes, our mouths found each other and our lips were pressed together.

No words were exchanged when I snagged Bryan's hat, a symbol of conquer, experience, and possession, which I had no

right to claim. The infidelity riveted me; made me giddy.

Back at the campsite, Bryan's girlfriend Jackie was emotionally charged. She had no idea to where her beloved had taken off, and luckily, my cousins kept her from searching for him. She was less than excited to see me in a familiar cap.

I am told that I flirted inordinately with Bryan. The details are fuzzy, because of the liquor, but what I know is this: Gail told Christine about the excursion. My cousin had words with me, telling me to cool it, to control myself, to calm down. Ryan had gone inside the RV to take a nap. Awakened by Bryan to brag about the happenings at Tanglewood, Ryan became outright pissed on two counts; to be woken up, and to have had such salacity.

"I am here with my family," Ryan proclaimed in angry tones that the thin walls of the camper could not hold.

"I know. I'm sorry."

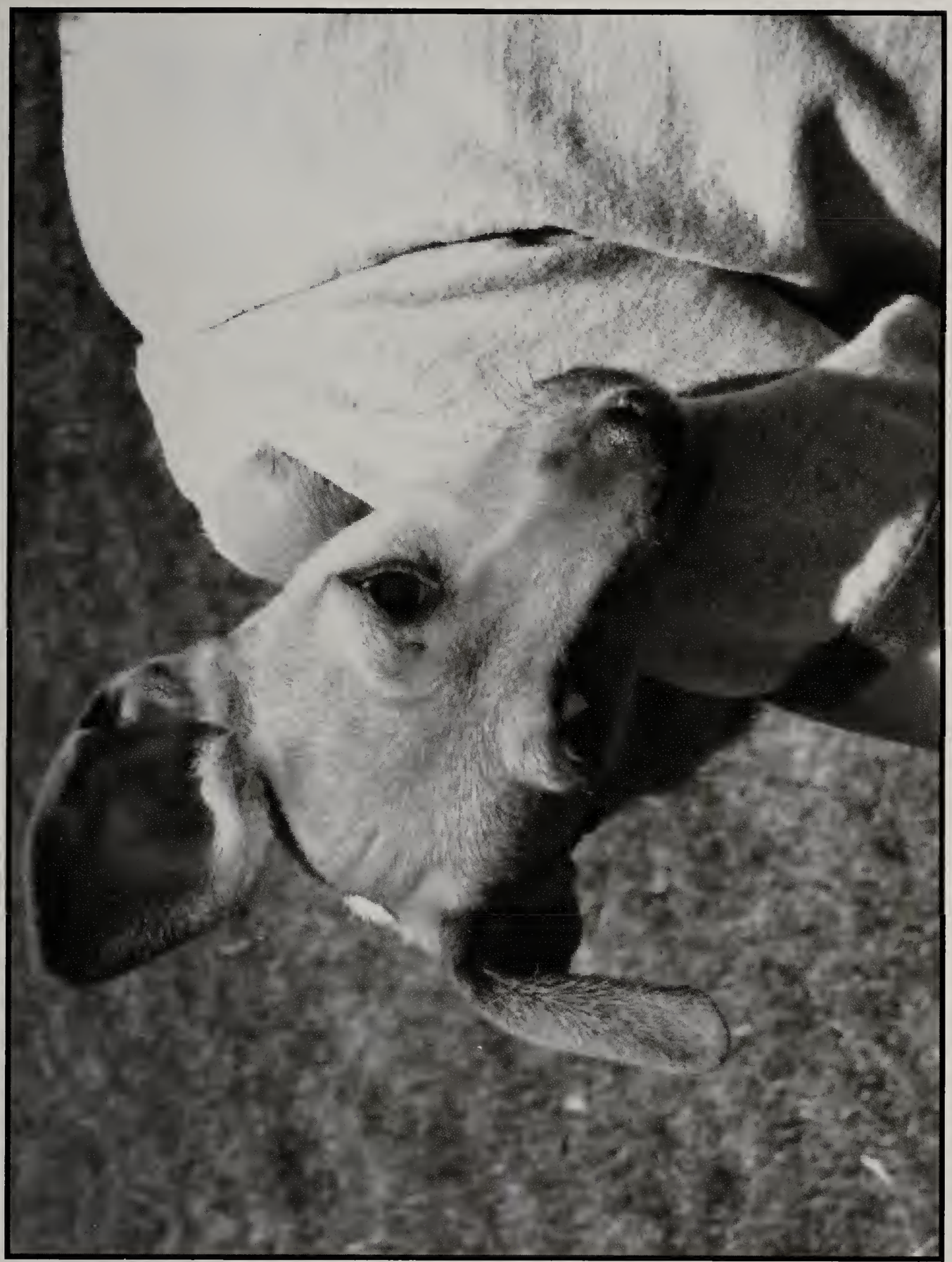
"How could you pull such a thing?"

"It just happened."

"Do you have any consideration for Jackie at all? Now your girlfriend doesn't want my cousin to hang out with us. Pull another stunt like that, and you'll have to go home."

I began setting up cups for beer pong. Bryan filled the water cups with ice, which I found to be inexplicably stupid, so I dumped the ice on him. This was the final straw. Ryan tried to kick me out of the campsite, attempted to send me to spend the rest of the evening with my family. He said he could not handle my childish behavior. I held my ground, keeping an even temper. I was intoxicated and oblivious to corruption in my actions; I saw nothing worthy of excitement, criticism, accusation, or blame - nothing so astoundingly inexcusable to remove me from the party. My uncle noticed the discord and approached as if to intervene. The argument died instantly and the night was able to resume as planned.

Although I evaded serious trouble, although Jackie never confronted me, I still have to deal with the results of one frivolous swim: I am no longer allowed to go to Wildwood alone with my cousins. My family fears there will be another altercation, and without supervision, it may result in domestic battery. I feel as if I have let my family down, that I've disappointed them with my actions. Now I have learned to keep my clothes on. The liberty to be naked is only allowed in the privacy of a residential establishment. I wonder if I'll ever again feel the cool depths of Tanglewood against my exposed skin.

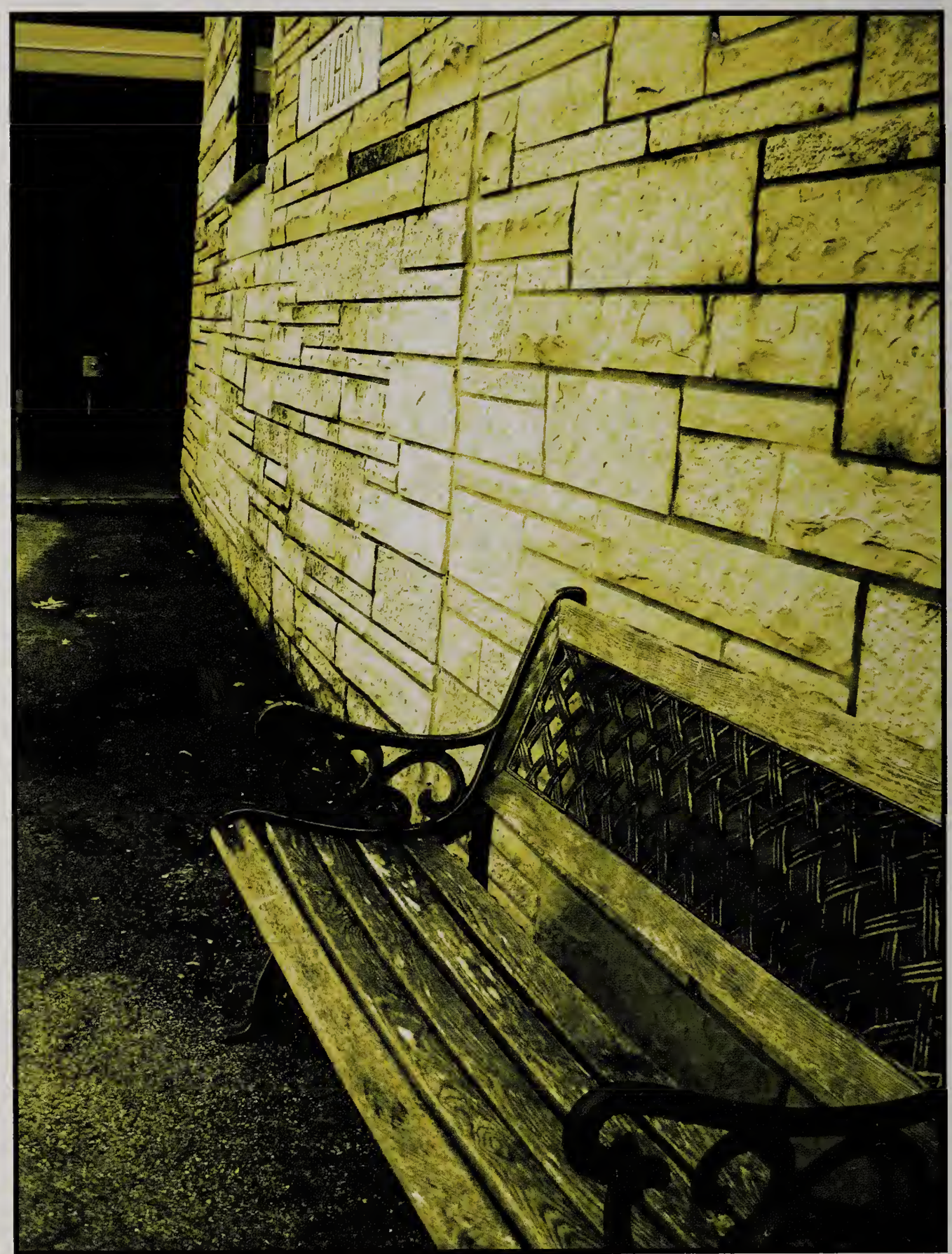


Gone Doggy Gone

Kara Ponce

NOSTALGIC

SARAH SABALLA



911

MIRANDA GOTHARD

I picked up the habit when I was working
as a waitress. It was summer time
and the weather rarely presented a problem for me;
it was the patrons that made me paranoid.
I would dial 911 when walking home in the dark,
usually in the early hours of the morning.
"This is not an emergency. Will you just talk with me
until I make to back to my place?"
It was the regulars that scared me,
the ones who scheduled their day around meals
in my section of the twenty-four hour diner.
But the kind women
on the other end of the line
never minded my unconventional attempt
towards false security. They chatted with me
light-heartedly, and often frequently:
I came to know Amanda and Dixie quite well.

Freedom Train

Brian Michael James Smallwood

i thought that ticket of mine was golden
until that plane hit the 2nd tower
& there we sat
in dismay & confusion
thinking about our brothers
unable to move or speak
isolated & [shell]shocked
by the images
piercing our consciousness

Stained Tulip

Megan Inserra





Storm Front

Kat Boehle

Wordeater #121 & Fall 09 E-zine Awards

Poetry

The John Stobart Award for Poetry was established in honor of the founder and guiding light of Wordeater. He retired from JJC's English/World Languages Department in 1999 having sponsored 106 issues.

Da Omen	**Legal Verse**
Miranda Gothard	**911**
Theresa Ragan	**Get in My Way Lord**
brian smallwood	**falls church, Virginia**
Jesse Wason	**Work**

Prose

Shawn Faust	**Tourist**
Miranda Gothard	**Too Precious to Keep**
Mitchell Kristie	**Masochism Never Looked So Cool**

Visual Arts

Zack Ferlin	**Scarf 2**
Mick	**Enter...If You Dare**
Sarah Saballa	**Nostalgic**
Chelsea Volinsky	**Cotton Candy**

Jurors

Kristin LaTour, Associate Professor
English/World Languages

Lee Anne Marino, Assistant Professor
English/World Languages

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Wordeater is always accepting submissions for its next print and e-zine issues. Wordeater is published in May and December.

Wordeater accepts poetry, prose fiction, creative nonfiction, essays, reviews, art, photography, comics, music, spoken word recordings, short films, and other multi-media for publication consideration.

All written work must be word-processed in Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) and submitted through wordeater@jjc.edu.

All multimedia must be submitted in appropriate formats either through wordeater@jjc.edu or CD/DVD to Adam Heidenreich (C-1059).

All work must be original and unpublished. Artists retain all rights to their own work and may publish it in other media.

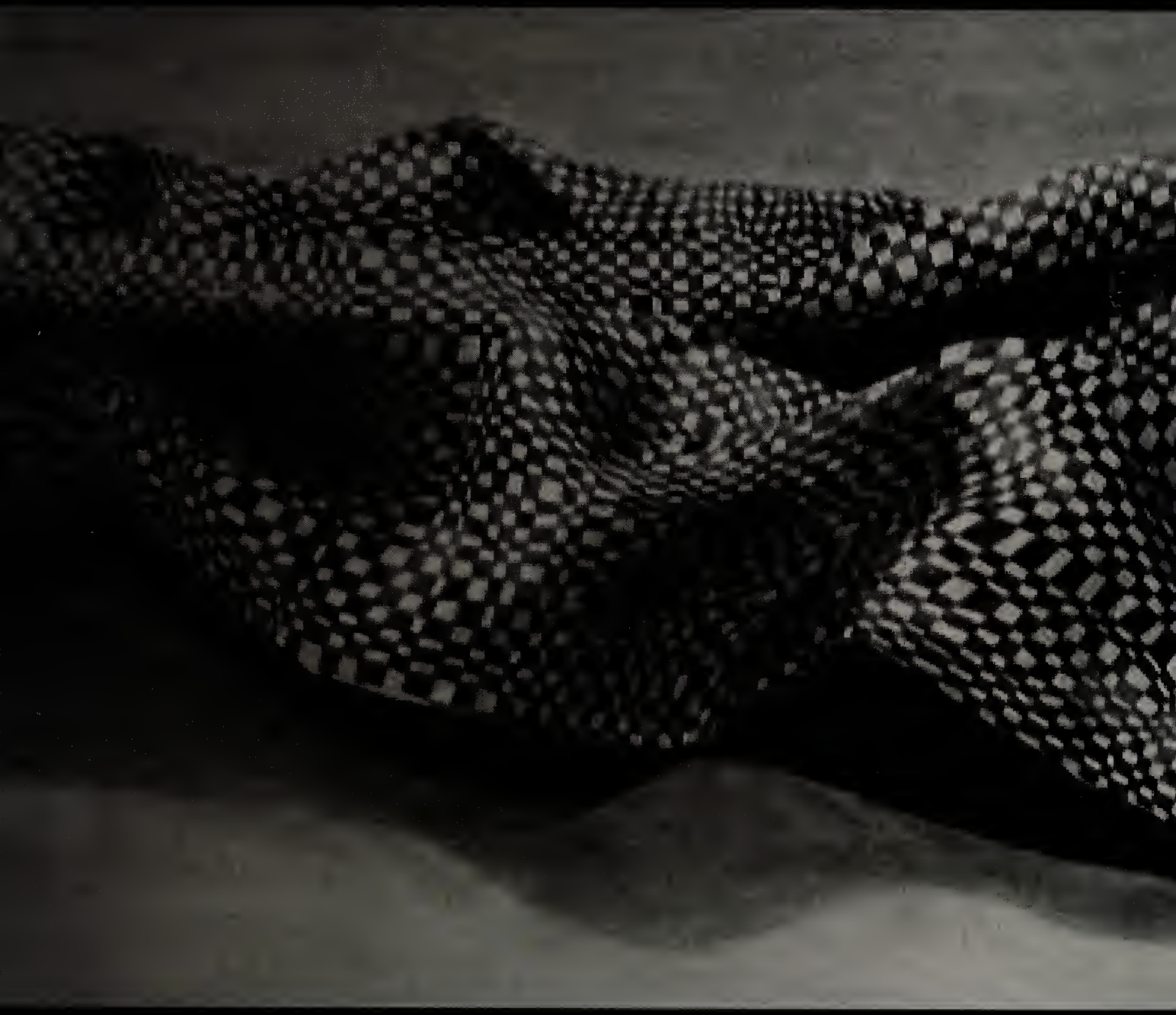
Submissions may include a brief "About the Artist" biography (50 words or less), a digital photo, and a link to a web page for promotional purposes. This content will be included if the work is chosen for the e-zine.

Please include a separate cover letter with your name, address, email, phone number, and titles of the work you submit. Please identify yourself as a current student, alumni, or a present or former faculty or staff member. Works will be judged anonymously by the student Editorial Board. There is no limit on the number of submissions, but it is suggested artists submit only a representative collection.

Except for original artwork, submissions will not be returned.

Editorial changes may be made for readability and presentation.

All work must be submitted through wordeater@jjc.edu or sent to Adam Heidenreich, Assistant Professor of English, Wordeater Advisor (C-1059), in appropriate digital format (CD or DVD) or with instructions for scanning or digital photography.



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